THE WORLD.

NUMBER CLXXIII.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *April* the 22d, 1756.

IT was the advice of an old friend of mine upon his death-bed to his ſon, who had been guilty of ſome enormous offences which he wiſhed to keep concealed, that he ſhould take care how he offered himſelf as a candidate for a ſeat in parliament; for that an oppoſition would be like dooms-day to him, when all his ſins would be remembered and brought to light. This is generally the caſe at elections; the moſt ſecret actions of the candidates themſelves are not only revealed, but the aſhes of their anceſtors are ranſacked in the grave, to ſupply matter for ſcandal and defamation.

COMMON

COMMON as this obſervation may be, it will enable us to account for all the malice and uncharitableneſs which we meet with in the world. We are all candidates for wealth, honour, or fame, and cannot bear that another ſhould ſucceed in what ourſelves have failed.

BUT why the ſpirit of defamation ſhould be ſo frequently exerted againſt the dead, is a matter ſomewhat puzzling. Death, by putting an end to rivalſhip, ſhould, one would think, put an end to all the animoſities which aroſe from that rivalſhip; and the grave that buries the man, ſhould bury alſo his failings. But according to Shakeſpear,

The EVIL *that men do, lives after them;*
The GOOD *is oft' interred with their bones.*

It is indeed very hard, that death which pays all other debts, ſhould be able to make no compoſition with envy: yet ſo it is; and, excepting a late memorable inſtance, where the virtues of a great and good man were too glaring in his life to be forgotten at his death, I have ſcarcely known it to be otherwiſe. The ladies indeed, whom I am always ambitious of honouring, have too much gentleneſs and good-humour to defame the dead, eſpecially their dead huſbands. After burying the very worſt in the world, it is uſual with them, on a ſecond marriage with the beſt, to put them daily in mind of the complying diſpoſitions and other virtues of their *poor dear firſt huſbands.*

HAPPY is it that the works of men of wit, learning and genius have juſtice done them after their deaths; though I am apt to believe the merit we aſcribe to them then, has it's foundation in ill-nature; as by admiring the productions of the dead, we are enabled by the compariſon, to condemn thoſe of the living. We read the works

works of the former with a deſire to find out beauties, and of the latter to diſcover faults. Our acquaintance with an author is another circumſtance againſt him. We are too apt to connect the foibles of his life with what he writes; and if he has unfortunately wanted talents to ſhine in converſation, we are generally blind to the wit of his writings. The reaſoning of an atheiſt in proof of a firſt cauſe, or of a libertine for morality, is ſure to be laughed at by thoſe who know them; and it is only when a man's writings can be ſeparated from his life, that they will be read with candour and impartiality. It may be obſerved farther, that in a country like ours, where party is apt to influence every thing, a man that profeſſes himſelf openly on one ſide of the queſtion, will never be allowed the leaſt degree of merit by thoſe on the other. Of this the immortal Milton is a witneſs, whoſe attachments to Cromwell had thrown ſuch a cloud over his abilities at the reſtoration, that the copy of the nobleſt poem in the world was not only ſold for a mere trifle, but many years elapſed before it was diſcovered to be a work worth reading. Even Addiſon, whoſe Spectators and other eſſays are deſervedly the admiration of all who read them, and by compariſon with which it is a kind of faſhion to condemn all other writings of the ſame kind, gives us to underſtand in his Spectator, number 542, and elſewhere in that work, that he met with as many cavillers as any of his ſucceſſors.

I HAVE been led by theſe reflections ſeriouſly to conſider what method an author ought to take, to ſecure to his writings the approbation of the public while he is ſtill alive. It was the ſaying of doctor Radcliffe to a young phyſician,

ſician, who aſked him what he ſhould do to get practice, "Turn atheiſt, and make yourſelf talked of." But though many a young phyſician may have availed himſelf of this advice, there are other practices that may ſucceed better with an author. Perſonal ſlander has always been eſteemed a very excellent method, and ſo indeed has wantonneſs; but where both are happily blended in the ſame work, as one ſometimes ſees them in very modern performances, they ſeldom fail of drawing the attention of the public. I have known naſtineſs attended with very happy effects, inaſmuch as it frequently ſupplies the want of wit, and is ſure of exciting the laugh in the genteeleſt companies. That the ladies are not diſpleaſed at it, is eaſy to be accounted for; naſtineſs is a ſtranger to them, and therefore entitled to their reſpect.

But if an author unfortunately wants talents for this kind of writing, there is nothing left for him that I know of, but to die as faſt as he can, that his works may ſurvive him. But the diſadvantage even in this caſe is, that common and natural deaths are but very little talked of; ſo that a man may give up the ghoſt to no manner of purpoſe: it is therefore moſt earneſtly to be recommended to all authors who are ambitious of ſudden and laſting fame, that they ſet about ſome device to get themſelves hanged. The ſeſſions-paper is more univerſally read than any other of the papers, and the deaths it records are more authentic and intereſting. A good dying ſpeech would be an excellent preface to an author's works, and make every body purchaſers. An advertiſement like the following could never fail of exciting curioſity.

"This day are publiſhed the poetical, moral, and "entertaining works of Thomas Crambo, Eſq; now un-

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"der ſentence of death in Newgate, for a rape and "murder."

UNDER theſe circumſtances indeed, an author may taſte of fame before death, and take his leap from the cart, with this comfortable aſſurance, that he has embraced the only opportunity in his power of making a proviſion for his family.

IF it ſhould be aſked why the having committed a rape or a murder ſhould raiſe the curioſity of the public to peruſe the author's works, the anſwer is, that people who do ſpirited things, are ſuppoſed to write in a ſpirited manner. It is for this reaſon that we are ſo fond of the hiſtories of warriors and great men, who, though they have happened to eſcape the gallows, have done ſomething every day to ſhew that they deſerved it.

IT is indeed as much to be wondered at as lamented, that while every author knows how eſſential it is both to his fame and the ſupport of his family to get himſelf hanged, that we do not ſee the words, EXECUTED AT TYBURN, always ſubjoined to his name in the title-page of his works. I hope it is not that authors have leſs regard for their families than other men that this is not uſually the caſe: for as to the love of life, we cannot ſuppoſe them to be poſſeſſed of it in an equal degree with other people; nor can they poſſibly be ignorant that the world will have a particular ſatisfaction in hearing that they have made ſo deſirable an end.

As for myſelf, I am an old man, and have not ſpirit enough to engage in any of thoſe enterprizes that would entitle my works to univerſal eſteem. It was expected indeed, that when I declared in my firſt paper againſt meddling with religion, I would avow myſelf an atheiſt

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